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Report of an internship in the City of Frankfurt am Main Six amazing weeks as an intern

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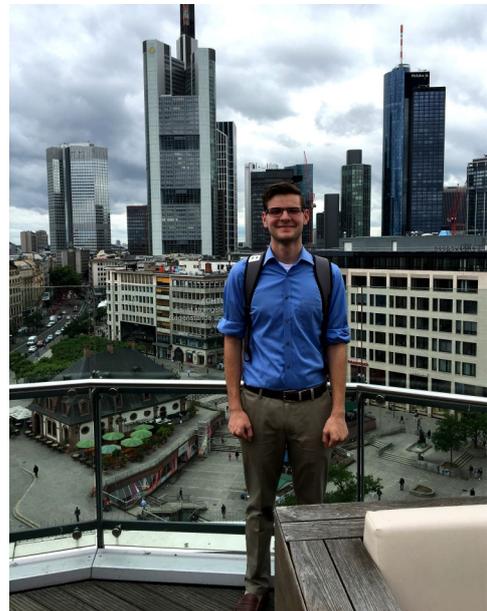
Coming from a German-American family that has sadly lost the language through the past few generations, *Thomas Schloo* says that he always had a dream to travel back to Germany and to experience the land of his ancestors. Being an ambitious German minor in his first year of college, he thought that the best way to afford such a trip would be through an internship. After lengthy applications, he was blessed, as he says, to receive an offer to intern with the City Government of Frankfurt, in the Treasurer's Department, for six weeks, June to July 2017.

It was a pleasure for *Juliane Adameit* to learn from *Thomas Schloo* that he would be happy to be guest in a German family during his stay in Frankfurt. Thus she took action to make an arrangement with SSG-member *Dr. Heidi von Leszczynski* and *Susanne von Münchhausen* that *Thomas Schloo* was offered a guest room with a German family. Also for the president of the Steuben-Schurz-Gesellschaft, *Dr. Ingrid Gräfin zu Solms-Wildenfels* this information was good news expressing her thanks to all involved in the realization of this great idea.

This is *Thomas'* report he sent to *Juliane Adameit*, Coordinator of the USA Interns-Program of the Steuben-Schurz-Gesellschaft in Frankfurt am Main. Despite worries that I was not ready to intern in Germany, as I had only been studying German for four years, I decided to take the risk and head to Germany for six amazing weeks.

One of the best parts of my internship was not even the internship itself, even though that was truly great, but the host family I was thankfully able to stay with. They allowed me to make this experience even more immersive. Instead of coming home from work everyday, going back to my single room apartment alone, and probably

going on the internet, watching American movies and talking to American friends, I continued the German onslaught. Now I say "onslaught" because it was just that at first. Having only ever spoken German for a maximum of an hour a day, it was a dramatic shift to using German as my primary language. And though this need was a great need to have, as it helped me very much, it was tiring, frustrating, depressing and, at times, impossible, but lingual progress comes from these moments of exhaustion and uncomfortableness.



"Me in Frankfurt"

Basically, my host family allowed me to use German around the clock. Furthermore, they were always there to give me advice for all I did and all the questions I had because even as similar as it seems, Germany has some clear and unexpected

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differences. Best of all, they allowed my social circle in Germany to expand, as I would go to events with them and meet new people thanks to their help. My host family, needless to say, was a crucial aspect of my experience and growth in Germany.

Of course, the reason I was in Germany was for an internship. Besides a phone call a month prior, I had no idea what to expect for this internship. I was only a college freshman and had no idea, what the city treasury would want my help for. However, as I arrived for my first day, it all became clear. I was greeted by my wonderful advisor, *Frau Hoppe*, in Römerberg, and from there, she gave me my internship schedule and explained to me what I would be doing for the next five weeks. To my surprise, I would not be staying strictly with the treasury, but truly experience the entire financial hand of Frankfurt's government.

My first week I did stay with the city treasurer and was lucky to be there during the week they were rolling out a new tax. This allowed me to truly see the inner workings of the process required to accomplish such a task. I was also able to sit in on the press conference, sitting next to the city treasurer of Germany's financial capital and the Oberbürgermeister of Frankfurt. Best of all, I ended up on German TV. My experience with the treasury was fantastic especially because of how nice and helpful my colleagues were, helping me adjust and often showing me around the city.



In front of The Römer-Rathaus

The second week I was with the "Kassen und Steueramt", allowing me to see the more ground implementation of financial policies within the city. During this week, I sat in with multiple different

workers, allowing myself to shadow all they do. I was able to learn how fines and taxes are enforced within the city, how property tax values are determined and altered when property is renovated, how city clerical errors are remedied, how all the money is moved per day for the city to finance itself and how it takes out loans when needed.

My third week was even cooler, as I moved around all the different companies, in which the city is invested. The first day I was with the Verkehrs-Gesellschaft Frankfurt (VGF), which was the public transport provider of Frankfurt. Being the fifth largest city in Germany, with hundreds of thousands commuters each day, it was fascinating to get such an intimate look at the heart that keeps the city alive and moving.

The second day I was with "Messe Frankfurt", which is an international company that organizes trade type fairs around the country. The international flair to the company was fascinating as a foreigner in Germany. I also never knew so much money could be made on fairs, but I loved the people I met at Messe Frankfurt. The third day, I interned at the most important place in the city for a foreigner: the airport. Fraport is an amazing and huge company, employing over 70,000 workers, making it the largest employer in Frankfurt. The coolest experience was being taken on the airfield with other interns, being able to see the planes land.

The following two days, I learned how the city manages and monitors all the assets and expenses they have, as I was with the accounting department. Having only learned only a bit of accounting, I thought it was so interesting being taught the concept in German. I also learned how the Germans are uniquely cautious when it comes to how assets are valued. My favorite moment with the accountants, however, was when one worker told me to promise him that if I forgot everything, I would remember that when leading my life, to always realize why I am doing something and to always have a reason for all I do.

The fourth week I was first with the part of the government that bridges that gap between the government and the citizens: the press department. As I was at the press department, there was a delegation in America, therefore, I saw firsthand how the flow of sources came together to compile hourly pressers about the status of the delegation. I also enjoyed experiencing how the city is attempting to stay modern with its increased use of social media in reaching the world.

Also during my fourth week, I got to learn how the governing of the city is handled by their parliament-

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ary system. For two days I got to shadow the Christian Democratic Union of Frankfurt, actually getting to sit in and speak at their planning meetings, seeing first-hand how issues are presented and discussed in a city government. The last day I was able to sit in on the parliamentary meeting of the city, where all parties and politicians come together to govern the city. I really enjoyed this glimpse, as it is a completely different system as in America.



**Fourth of July celebration
hosted by the U.S. Consulate General in Frankfurt**

For my final week I was interning with the Economic Development Team of Frankfurt; a pseudo-public company of Frankfurt that seeks to grow Frankfurt through business, both international and domestic. Being the most private department I was with during my entire internship, it was refreshing to see a new importance of networking and how international this company's mindset was. Since I was there during the week of the Fourth of July, I was able to go to the Fourth of July celebration hosted by the U.S. Consulate in Frankfurt, allowing me to witness first-hand the friendship between America and Germany and how important this friendship is. It was wonderful being able to meet and discuss with many the current politics and happenings in the world between America and Germany and all that a continued friendship has to offer. It was also refreshing to hear the compliments for being able to speak such good German, giving mutual hope for a continued international friendship into the future.



After an extra week in Germany, where I was able to travel to multiple cities, my dream was truly met. The highlight of my trip had to be when I was in Hamburg and I found Schloostraße (Schloo is my family's last name and they are from Hamburg). I never thought I'd meet so many fantastic people on my travels and experience Germany so intimately, from business, to their personal lives, to the distinct regions in this great country. However, after six weeks I sadly had to leave, but now I cannot wait for the next time I am back to my unofficial second home, Frankfurt!

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J. Adameit, G. Schanno, Fotos: Thomas Schloo



Report on SSG-online: <http://www.steuben-schurz.org/usainterns/forum/forum.htm>

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